



NEWS RELEASE
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May 1, 2015

Lovingood: County rolls out more innovations



San Bernardino County continues to roll out innovative programs and technologies to address issues from reducing homelessness and combatting welfare fraud and reaching out to veterans.

The latest innovation is a pilot program to conduct virtual building inspections using smart phone video technology, said San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors Vice Chairman Robert Lovingood. The San Bernardino County Building and Safety Division intends to launch a pilot program in the High Desert and mountain regions by offering “virtual inspections” as an option for simple inspections, such as for water heaters, re-inspections on minor corrections, rooftop solar and re-roofing projects. The pilot program will run at least 90 days.

“This is the kind of smart innovation that saves time, taxpayer dollars and improves customer service,” said Lovingood, who commended project leader Jim Sowers, with the San Bernardino County Building and Safety Division.

At the start of a virtual inspection, the contractor’s location is confirmed using GPS and the contractor uses his phone’s video camera to guide the inspector through a virtual visual inspection, according to Sowers.

While virtual inspections are expected to save money, the pilot project will look at various factors including limits of videoconferencing capacity, costs to expand, system licenses and video content storage costs. Findings from the pilot period will assist County Land Use Services Department as part of the County’s EZ-On Line Permits program.

New system to detect welfare fraud

The virtual inspection innovation comes on the heels of the Board of Supervisors’ decision April 21 to buy an automated welfare fraud detection system that red-flags possible violations.

“Taxpayers have every right to expect that government actively roots out waste, fraud and abuse. This welfare fraud detection system is an important step in keeping that commitment,” Lovingood said.

To effectively monitor CalFresh activity, the automated risk model provides a periodically refreshed list of probable non-compliant cases and basic investigative support data. State and federal funds will cover 85 percent of the cost of the fraud detection system. Counties are mandated to administer state and federal public assistance programs.

“San Bernardino County has a solid record of innovation,” Lovingood said. “We will continue working to leverage technology and innovative thinking to deliver better results to taxpayers.”

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